

COMMUNICATIONS 435
EDITORIAL AND CRITICAL WRITING

Fall Semester 1990

Dr. Anthony R. Fellow, associate professor of communications

Class: Thursdays, 7-9:45 p.m.

Office Hours: Mondays, 1-2 p.m.; Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Office: Humanities 330

Phone: 714-773-2023

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Prerequisites: Communications Department English Usage Test, upper division writing course and junior standing. Editorial and critical writer and opinion columnist roles. Techniques of editorial writing and aspects of critical thinking.

TEXTS

Harry W. Stonecipher. *Editorial and Persuasive Writing*. Mamaroneck, N.Y.: Hasting House, 1990.

The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.

A daily newspaper

A weekly newsmagazine, preferably *Time*

An almanac

A pocket dictionary

SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The role and responsibilities of the editor, editorial writer and opinion columnist will provide the general scope of the course, with emphasis upon the techniques of editorial writing and aspects of critical thinking. Lectures, class discussions, editorial conferences and written assignments will all be utilized in helping the student to develop competence in the gathering, organizing and presenting of reasoned opinion in good editorial form and in a persuasive manner. Editorial problems, methods, policies, style, and the fundamentals of persuasion and attitude change will form the basis for study.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Four general-interest editorials.
2. One political editorial.
3. One tribute editorial on a columnist or cartoonist.
4. One broadcast editorial.
5. Six editorial paragraphs, two a week until six are written (as assigned).
6. One letter to a daily newspaper.
7. A short library research activity.
8. Six current events quizzes.
9. One mid-term editorial critique
10. A final examination based on readings and lectures.
11. A final assignment, which will be an interpretative piece and an informative or argumentative editorial.
12. One column.

GRADING PROCEDURES

1. Editorials will be graded on a 22-point basis. Possible total for all editorials is 154.
2. Editorial paragraphs will be graded on a 4-point basis. Possible total for all editorial paragraphs is 24 points.
3. Final project assignment will be evaluated on an 88-point basis.
4. A mid-term editorial critique will be worth 25 points.
5. Final examination over textbook readings and lecture materials will be evaluated on a 100-point basis.
6. A brief library research project will be worth 10 points.
7. A letter to the editor will be worth 5 points.
8. Current events quizzes every other Thursday will be graded on a 6-point basis. Possible current events quizzes is 36 points.
9. One opinion column worth 22 points.

Thus, the total number of points will be:

Editorials	154 points
Editorial Paragraphs	24 points
Mid-term Critique	25 points
Final Examination	100 points

Interpretative Piece	88 points
Letter to the Editor	5 points
Current Events Quizzes	36 points
Library Research	10 points
Column	22 points
Participation/Attendance	<i>factored for borderline grades</i>

Total points equal 464. Grades will be distributed as follows:

<i>90 percent (464-418) of the total points</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>80 percent (417-371) of the total points</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>70 percent (370-325) of the total points</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>60 percent (324-278) of the total points</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>50 percent or lower</i>	<i>F</i>

DEADLINES

It is expected that all written work will be submitted at the time scheduled. Ground rules will be discussed to assist in the preparation of all editorial copy. Students's presence at all class sessions is expected.

Editorial paragraphs, editorials, and final interpretative piece must be submitted in **DUPLICATE**. You will be penalized points if a duplicate is not submitted. One copy will be submitted to the **Daily Titan**.

SUGGESTED READING SOURCES

Editorial thinking and writing eerges from understanding obtained in background rading about contemporary news events and issues. Every student should read one news magazinee (preferably **Time** magazine), one daily newspaper er (preferably the Los Angeles **Times** or the Orange County **Register**) regularly.

Current events quzzes will be taken from these sources. Students will be quizzed on major news events. Students should pay particular attention to the newspaper's front page, metropolitan section, and editorial page. The press section in **Time** magazine also should be a regular part of your reading.

Current event quizzes are not meant to rick students. It is imperative that you are aware of what is going on in the world. Students also must be prepared to participate in editorial conferences.

The following sources will be of value to the student:

The Masthead, a quarterly, the official publication of the National Conference of Editorial Writers.

Columbia Journalism Review, published bimonthly by the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University.

Nieman Reports, published quarterly by the Society of Nieman Fellows, Harvard University.

The ASNE Bulletin, published by the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

IPI Report, monthly bulletin of the International Press Institute.

Journalism Quarterly, published by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Grassroots Editor, quarterly publication of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors.

The Gannetteer, a monthly magazine for staff members of the Gannett Group.

Editorially Speaking, published annually by the Gannett Group Newspapers.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

The progress of the course will depend upon general student mastery of each phase of editorial writing. Some topics/assignments may be shifted if current news developments warrant rescheduling. Assignments details will be given during class discussions.

DAY OF

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Sept. 6 | THE OPINION FUNCTION: AN INTRODUCTION
The Editorial Paragraph
Conventions |
| Sept. 13 | THE AMERICAN EDITORIAL: A BRIEF HISTORY
THE EDITORIAL: CLASSIFYING AND WRITING
Current Events Quiz 1

Assignments:
1. Stonecipher: Pages 3-38.
2. Editorial paragraphs (2) due. |
| Sept. 20 | THE CHOICE OF EDITORIAL SUBJECTS
FINDING FACTS: REFERENCES AND RESOURCES
Current Events Quiz 2
Assignments:
1. Stonecipher: Pages 39-74.
2. Letter to the editor due. |

**Sept. 27 VERBAL AND STATISTICAL FALLACIES
PERSUASIVE TECHNIQUES
THEORIES OF PERSUASION**

Assignments:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 110-137
2. Editorial to explain/inform due.

**Oct. 4 EDITORIAL CREDIBILITY
Current Events Quiz 3**

Assignments:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 154-171.
2. Editorial paragraphs (2) due.

Oct. 11 THE EDITORIAL APPEAL

Assignments:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 171-194.
2. Editorial to persuade due.

Oct. 18 MID-TERM EDITORIAL CRITIQUE

**Oct. 25 THE EDITORIAL AUDIENCE
THE INTERPRETATIVE PIECE
THE POLITICAL EDITORIAL
Current Events Quiz 4**

Assignments:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 194-210.
2. Tribute editorial due.

Nov. 1 THE SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Assignments:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 210-229.
2. Political editorial due.

**Nov. 8 DEBATE: EDITORIAL PAGE ENDORSEMENTS MAKE AN IMPACT ON VOTING FOR
A CANDIDATE???**

Current Events Quiz 5

Assignments:

1. Readings to be assigned.
2. Editorial paragraphs (2) due.

Nov. 15 FEEDBACK

Assignment:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 229-247.
2. Change of pace editorial due.

Nov. 22 THE BROADCAST EDITORIAL
Current Events Quiz 6

Assignment:

1. Readings to be assigned.
2. Opinion column due.

Nov. 29 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Dec. 6 THE EDITORIAL CARTOON
Current Events Quiz (Makeup)

1. Readings to be assigned.
2. Broadcast editorial due.

Dec. 13 THE AMERICAN EDITORIAL: 2000AD
Wrapup

Assignment:

1. Stonecipher: Pages 247-291.
2. Final project due.

Dec. 20 FINAL EXAMINATION

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8. Six current events quizzes.
9. One mid-term editorial critique
10. A final examination based on readings and lectures.
11. A final assignment, which will be an interpretative piece and an informative or argumentative editorial. - *explains the "why" of something*
12. One column.

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(Nov. 8)

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Current Events Quiz 6

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Dec. 20

FINAL EXAMINATION